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GROUND ZERO

Ground Zero News

January 1994 Volume 2, No. 1

Amendment 2 Tossed out

PRESS RELEASE FROM GROUND ZERO
December 14, 1993

In their infinite wisdom the Founding Fathers established a Constitution that is difficult to change. They intended the Constitution to resist tampering that results from the "emotion of the moment" that often seizes the general electorate. There are those who would dwell on the proposition that when the courts overturn a popularly passed initiative they are acting against the will of the majority. These people fail to realize that this is the strength of our country. The majority may not infringe on the fundamental rights of those in the minority.

Historically, the "will of the majority" argument was used heavily by those who would deny equal rights and the necessity of integrating our society in the fifties. Governor Faubus of Arkansas was determined by a Gallup Poll in 1958 as being one of the ten most popular men in America solely based on his resistance to court orders and his championing of these arguments. In the same year, as a result of the sending of troops to Little Rock, another Gallup Poll determined that over 60% of Americans would eliminate and drastically change the Bill or Rights in order to prevent integration.

Today, Ground Zero is pleased to announce that Judge Bayless took a definitive stand against discrimination and bigotry and enforced the tenets of equal protection under the law declaring Colorado's Amendment 2 as unconstitutional. While Ground Zero has not had the opportunity to read and study the decision, we are pleased with the decision as it is generally understood by us.

Those, however, who believe that this decision returns the situation to what it was when the supporters of Amendment 2 introduced it, as sorely mistaken. First, this is but one step in what will probably be a long and expensive court battle. It is estimated that it will cost the state as much as one million dollars to take the case to the Supreme Court. Additionally, Colorado for Family Values has already announced that they have three new initiatives in the works from which to choose should the decision go against them.

Beyond this, however, is the fact that it will take years to mend the rift in society and to correct the stereotype of myths and lies that Colorado for Family Values has caused in offering and winning this initiate. Ground Zero does not doubt that there are many good people who have been convinced that Amendment 2 is the work of the Lord and who believe that Gays and Lesbians are a menace to society. We know, also, that many more are guided by bigotry and prejudices that rear their ugly heads often whenever the rights of individuals different from themselves are in questions.

Both of the above are misled and encouraged by the lies, myths, hate and intolerance fed to them by their leaders; leaders motivated not, as they would lead you to believe, by some higher religious reason but, rather, by lust for wealth and a hunger for power. These "leaders" view the issues they mount simply as vehicles to achieve their ultimate goals. This agenda is that which must be identified and resisted. It is an agenda that threatens more than just the rights of Gays and Lesbians; it would destroy the lines of separation between church and state and our democratic form of government.

Gays and Lesbians do not seek and have no intentions of seeking the special protections that the Radical Right led the public to believe were sought, ie. the remedies of "affirmative action", etc. They seek only equal protection. This will not come until such "equality" is guaranteed by inclusion in a state Civil Rights Act or by inclusion in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This protection is necessary to ensure the establishment of basic civil rights that all Americans are guaranteed. Such civil rights protection is wholly separate from the so called "special rights" that CFV preaches about. This protection grants basic human rights, not special rights.

Today, Ground Zero is also pleased to announce that we are joining with the vast majority of other Gay and Lesbian organizations around the state of Colorado to call an end to the national boycott of Colorado. The boycott was initiated out of a need to send a message to the state of Colorado and the country that discrimination in any form is unacceptable. This message has been conveyed very successfully and the effects of the boycott have been unmeasurably productive. Now it is time to let Colorado and the rest of the Country also know that economic sanction are no longer necessary as Amendment 2, for the time being, is no longer a threat. We are grateful to the many individuals, organization and companies who went out of their way to take a stand against discrimination and who heeded the call for the national boycott.

However, Ground Zero and other Colorado organizations are calling for the termination of the boycott as a result of our understanding that it is time to move forward and, instead of concentrating on combating Amendment 2 itself, we believe it is time to move forward proactively to combat the attitudes and thinking that led to Amendment 2's passage in November of 1992. A campaign of lies and misinformation was waged against Gay and Lesbian Americans during the Amendment 2 campaign -- the effects of these misleading stereotypes are damaging and are still inciting discrimination and outright violence against Gay and Lesbian people. The Colorado Gay and Lesbian community is committed to doing positive outreach and education regarding these issues. **Education, and not the boycott, will be Ground Zero's focus in 1994.**

Inside....

-Ground Zero presents our first "pin-up" (calendar- that is!!)

-AIDS bracelets available.....2
-Newsletter Changes.....2
-Gay Comics ?.....3
-National News.....4,5
-Sound Off.....6

Changes...

This isn't Burger King ... but this is having it your way! This is your newsletter and we are listening to your suggestions. This month, we begin our Second Volume of the Ground Zero Newsletter with a new format.

You'll find the calendar in a pull-out, pin-up form, so that it can land under those cute magnets that clutter the front of your 'fridge. Details about the events are printed on the back of the calendar .

You also suggested more articles of interest from national publications and we are working hard to fulfill your wishes.

You asked for more local insight, more of a finger on the pulse on the local movement; and we're looking for even more input (your writings) on your feelings about your surroundings here in Colorado.

Look for more changes in the next couple of months, we're growing and experimenting with your suggestions to bring you the best and the most. Want to join the staff or submit an article?

Call the office, express your thoughts, write your opinions, we'd love to hear from you!

The *Ground Zero Newsletter* is an authorized publication for members of Ground Zero. A condensed version is published for monthly distribution through friendly vendors to the general public. Contents of the *Ground Zero Newsletter* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the Board of Directors of Ground Zero. The editorial content is edited and prepared by the Newsletter staff/committee.

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BEST FRIEND'S DEATH BY AIDS INSPIRES FUND-RAISING BRACELET

Article taken from the *Gazette Telegraph*, October 14 (Knight-Rider Newspapers)

The despairing feeling of watching a friend die and a desire to help others provided the genesis of the Until There's A Cure bracelet.

"I lost my best friend to AIDS two years ago," says Dana Cappiello, the Woodside, Calif, woman behind the bracelet, "I knew people who had died of AIDS, but I'd never gone through it with anyone.

"When my friend died, so many people were unmoved. They said, 'Well, it's AIDS,' but it mattered so much to me. I wondered what can I do to get people compassionate and educated about this disease?"

Before he died, Cappiello's friend, Anthony Torrierri, visual director of Macy's, gave her a ring he had worn, which she started wearing. Looking at it and thinking of what she could do, Cappiello remembered the POW-MIA bracelets of the Viet-Nam War.

"I thought maybe we could get people to talk about AIDS through a bracelet," she says. Since she stared wearing the prototype bracelet earlier this year, she's seen it work the way she hoped.

The Until There's A Cure bracelet is a 5/16-inch wide cuff with a small AIDS awareness ribbon raised on the outside end of the cuff. The ribbon is in the same metal as the bracelet, which comes in silver plate for $20, sterling silver for $70 and 18-karat gold for $500. It comes in sizes small, medium and large.

Inside the bracelet are two incised boxes - one inscribed "Until There's A Cure" and the other blank for personalization.

"This is not a ribbon piece of jewelry where only 10 percent goes to AIDS," Cappiello says. "Once people understand that no one is taking a profit and that 100 percent of available funds is going to AIDS, they're very positive."

All money goes to the Until There's A Cure Foundation, in Menlo Park, an independent, charitable organization dedicated to fighting the AIDS epidemic by funding research, education and care service programs.

Cappiello says 50 percent of the money raised will go to the National Community AIDS Partnership (NCAP) in Washington, D.C., for distribution across the country, with half those funds going to care services and other half going to education. NCAP has promised to match funds. The foundation will distribute the other 50 percent to AIDS vaccine research.

Until There's A Cure is looking for retail outlets. Marketing thus far has been limited to mail orders via the Foundation's toll-free (800) 88-UNTIL number and sales at AIDS Walks. As of this month, more than $400,000 in bracelets have been sold.

Editor's note: When contacted, a spokesperson for the company said the response to orders from Colorado Springs was greater than any city of a similar size in the country.

Out of the closet...and onto the Airways....

Gay TV in Colorado Springs??

Ground Zero is pleased to note that Colorado Springs Cablevision now carries Denver's KBDI (channel 12) on channel 23. KBDI is a PBS station, making it the third on Colorado Springs Cablevision, that airs a great deal of original and interesting programming. On Thursday nights, KBDI airs gay and lesbian programming, including the Lambda Report. This joins Ground Zero's own monthly programming in its "Out" series on cable channel 9 at 9 PM. In January, the "OUT" presentation will be on Tuesday the 25th--programming to be announced.

Stand-Up Kinda Gays

Entertainment magazine,
Dec. 10,1993
by Jess Cagle

Jesse Helms and Rush Limbaugh, you'd better sit down: Gay comedians are suddenly cropping up everywhere, and about a dozen of them are making inroads into the mainstream. There's comedian-commentator Kate Clinton, age 46, discussing gays in the military on Nightline and opening her own one-woman Off-Broadway show, Out Is In, this month. There's Frank Maya, 38, teaching straight audiences at the Manhatten comedy mecca Caroline's how to say "FAB-ulous!" like a real gay man. And there's the famously controversial Lea DeLaria, 35, making a water shed appearance on The Arsenio Hall Show earilier this year as the first openly gay comic to break the late-night talk-show barrier. "It's the 1990's," she announced joyously. "It's hip to be queer, and I'm a bi-i-i-i-ig dyke!"

And this month brings another milestone: Out There, the first all-gay stand-up comedy special, airs throughout December on cable's Comedy Central channel. Hosted by DeLaria, the show features the deadpan Marga Gomez, who's in her early 30s, commenting on TV: "Just gay men and lesbians (are watching) Love connection," she says, "because it makes us feel good about our lives." HIV-positive Steve Moore, 39, jokes about his condition. The all-black comedy group Pomo Afro Homos peddles a Fierce Black Drag Queen kit in a QVC parody. And boy-next-door type Bob Smith, 34, confesses to experimenting with heterosexuality in college: "I slept with a straight guy," he says. "I was really drunk."

But why now? And why stand-up comedy, a medium notorious for political incorrectness, misogyny, and homophobia? For one thing, there's a glut of American comedy clubs in desperate need for fresh material. "audiences have been saturatedwith straight white comics who all sound alike and talk about the same things, like airplane food," explains comedian Jaffe Cohen, 40, who formed the groundbreaking comedy trio Funny Gay Males in 1989 with Smith and Danny McWilliams.

At the same time, the ongoing AIDS crisis and the gay community's response to it has grabbed media attention and helped make straight audiences more receptive to gays and gay issues. Openly gay Scott Thompson, 35, satirizes gay life as part of the Canadian sketch troupe the Kids in the Hall on CBS; Melrose Place and Roseanne have brought gay characters to prime time; GET, a year-old gay-orientented television network, expands to five cities this month; and entertainment mogul David Geffen, are living well out of the closet.

All comics mine the same areas-current events, religion, dating, but gay comics do it with a fresh twist. On Out There, Suzanne Westenhoefer, 32, wonders if a ban on gays in the military isn't such a bad idea. "You be careful!" she says sarcastically, pretending to wave goodbye to soldiers marching off to war. "We'll take care of your wives." And for gay comics, childhood is a mother lode of material. In his one-man show, Paying for the Pool, Maya recalls the moment he came out to his parent: "My father was so upset. We're Catholic. He took me to see the local priest, who is also gay....We spent two hours in his room listening to Judy Garland records." The Funny Gay Males are laughing at their own early years in Growing Up Gay, a partly autobiographical book slated for release in June 1995 by Hyperion-a division of Disney.

Comedians have come out of the closet in part to counter the antigay humor of their peers. Maya says that when he took up stand-up in 1989, "There was so much gay bashing. Sam Kinision and Andrew Dice Clay were very popular, but there were no other voices out there." But gay comedians aren't fooling themselves: universal acceptance is still years away. "A lot of comics say they're playing the mainstream, and (in fact) they're playing gay-comedy night at the Improv in L.A.," says Westenhoefer. Comedy clubs "are tossing us a bone." Gay comics have yet to sit on the sofas of Jay Leno or David Letterman.

And not everyone is laughing. Not long ago, DeLaria encountered protests during an appearance at a state college in Maine. "They tried to shout me down," she says, "but they couldn't, so they got up and left." After the show, one of the protesters stopped DeLaria on her way out. "I came up here to protest you," she told the comedian, "but I had a wonderful time. I'm leaving with a different idea about gays." Recalling the story, DeLaria lets loose a victory smile and says, "That's what it's all about."

The Comedy Channel airs on Colorado Springs Cablevision channel 65 Comedian DeLaria appears extensively on the program, "Two Drink Minimum".

Here they go again....

Group to target more gay rights issues

Gazette Telegraph, 12/8/93

After contributing nearly $400,000 to a battle over gay rights in Cincinnati, Colorado for Family Values appears willing to pump cash into similar efforts elsewhere.

Among those places is Austin, Texas, where a fight over gay rights is brewing.

"We have been in contact for some time with people in Texas," said Will Perkins, founder of Colorado for Family Values, which waged a successful campaign on behalf of Amendment 2.

"We are acting as a resource and will continue to do that for anyone who is addressing this issue and who requests our involvement," he said Tuesday.

Perkins said no money has been donated to the Austin effort yet, although Colorado for Family Values director Kevin Tebedo has visited the city to speak. But Perkins said the group is prepared to spend money received from donors outside Colorado on Amendment 2-style campaigns in other staes and cities. Amendment 2, which is on hold pending a court's ruling on its legality, would prohibit laws protecting gays from discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

"We feel that because we receive funds from out of state from people concerned onthis issue, it's up to us toexpend them on that issue wherever it is," Perkins said, declining to say how much Colorado for Family Values has collected.

The Rev. L. K. Jones, amember of Concerned Texans, said his group "most certainly" will ask Colorado for Family Values for financial help, although he didn't know how much will be needed. Concerned Texans is preparing a challenge to an Austin ordinance that extends medical and sick-leave benefits to domestic partners of city employees, **whether** homosexual or heterosexual.

The law, which was adopted by the City Council in September, takes effect Jan. 1. But Concerned Texans has collected between 3,000 and 4,000 of the 15,000 signatures it needs to bring the measure to a repeal vote. If submitted in January as planned, the petitions would assure a vote in May.

Colorado for Family Values' support of the Austin effort comes on the heels of its backing of a city charter measure promoted by Cincinnati's Citizens for Community Values.

In campaign spending reports released last week, Citizens for Community Values said the Colorado Springs-based group supplied $390,100 of the $491,773.51 it spent during the campaign. Residents voted by a margin of 62 percent to 38 percent on Nov. 2 to **amend** the city charter to prohibit enforcement of any laws based on sexual orientation. A city ordinance had prohibited discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, disability, marital status, **place of origin** or sexual orientation.

Perkins defended the expenditure: gay rights activists were angered by it.

"It's pretty obscene that that much money would come into our community from outside, to a group that claimed to be local," said Barry Grossheim, co-chairman of the gay rights group Stonewall Cincinnati.

A federal judge has blocked the charter amendment from taking effect until questions about its contitutionality can be fully argued in U.S. District Court.

Meanwhile, two new Cincinnati City Council members want to get rid of the 1992 human rights law that contains the provision to protect gays and lesbians against discrimination.

Friends around the Nation

Federal help requested for Mississippi lesbians

Gazette Telegraph, 12/9/93

The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force asked the government Wednesday to help protect a **feminist** educational retreat run by two lesbians in rural Mississippi.

Attorney General Janet Reno was asked to provide "immediate assistance in ending a violent situation in Ovett, Miss., between the community and two lesbians who own land in Jones County...The womens lives are in danger."

There was no immediate response by the Justice Department.

The call by Task Force Executive Director Peri Jude Radecic in Washington came after a community meeting in Ovett on Monday attended by 250 people opposed to the retreat, called Sister Spirit, Inc.

Wanda Henson, 39, and Brenda Henson, 48, said they set up the retreat on a one-time pig farm to champion issues important to women and to provide assistance to those in need. The two, who consider themselves to be married, said about 20 women live at the retreat.

Texas county alters its stance, reaches deal to lure Apple plant

Gazette Telegraph, 12/8/93

GEORGETOWN, TEXAS

Gay rights leaders called it a **triumph** over prejudice; others said it was proof that cold cash prevails. Whatever the reason, Williamson County compromised Tuesday on its objection to Apple Computer Inc.'s benefits policy for unmarried employees.

One week after they rejected a tax break plan for Apple, coujnty commissioners voted 3-2 Tuesday in favor of a financial package to lure the computer maker. Apple said it would accept the offer.

The center is expected to bring 1,700 jobs to the area by the end of the decade. The indirect impact of construction and new white-collar employees is estimated at 4,000 more new jobs.

County commissioners voted 3-2 last week to reject $750,000 in tax abatements that Apple wanted for its proposed $80 million customer support center. The three commissioners who voted against the abatement cited Apple's policy of providing health benefits to partners of unmarried employees - gay or straight.

The new incentive plan will reimburse taxes paid by Apple in exchange for giving the county right of way for roads and other improvememnts on the Apple site.

"Jobs prevailed over prejudice," said David Smith of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Not according to some conservatives. "Once again, we see an entity of goverment that has sold out its moral beliefs for economic growth," said Jeff Fisher, state director of the American Family Association.

The one commissioner who switched his vote, David Hays, said he still opposed Apple's benefits policy.

"Last week, I was asked to vote to use taxpayer dollars to subsidize, and therefore, tacitly endorse a benefits policy with which I disagree. Today's vote does nothing of the kind," he said at the commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Mike Heiligenstein, who devised the compromise, said the new plan willsave Apple about the same amount as the tax abatement would have.

Sound-off....
A member expresses thoughts on perceptions

I carefully cut their pictures out of the morning paper. I didn't want anybody I showed the pictures to be prejudiced or affected by the captions. I wanted to control what anyone who saw the pictures would know.

There they were; an older, retired man, and a young, athletic teenager. Anyone who reads or watches the local news would immediately recognize the photos as Vern Smalley and Carmine Tagliere, III. This is a very sad story about Carmine's death from a gunshot wound caused by Vern's gun after a traffic altercation. As I write this, the trial is unfolding and the facts are beginning to surface about the young man and his alleged assailant.

I searched for two people to show the pictures to; for someone who was not from here in town, and had no idea of how the pictures were related.

The first person I asked to look at the photos was a military retiree, and his reaction to the story of Vern and Carmine was of bias against Carmine. "After all, a good fellow retiree couldn't do wrong - it has to be a clear-cut case of self-defense. Why else would the good Colonel have shot a hot-headed kid? Vern was on his way to the commissary located on the USAF Academy grounds, right? Probably to take care of the shopping, his pension surely isn't enough to cover groceries in the civilian market. Poor guy, hope this incident teaches all the smart-ass kids a lesson - they should learn a little discipline on the road!"

I then found someone with no military background, a young forty-ish professional woman with teenagers of her own, almost the same age as Carmine. Horrified, she shook her head as I explained what had transpired, "Oh My God! I feel awful for the boy's parents and what they must be going through. It's such a shame to see a young life wasted. How could that man, who served in the military for so long have so little
respect for life? Hasn't he seen enough loss of life? He looks so dishonest, with that scraggly beard!

I got exactly what I had hoped for - I could decide what parts of the story to share with these strangers, just like the Homosexual Community story is shared with the Heterosexual Community by the "Religious Right" - just choice bits and pieces.

So what does this story have to do with prejudice? It proves that our backgrounds account for alot of how our feelings for and about others are formed. It proves how easily our ideas can be shaped by receiving only partial information. These are lessons we should all pay attention to in both the Gay and Straight communities. The first impression counts, and so do everyday actions.

Now that Amendment Two has been found unconstitutional, its more important than ever that we educate through our daily actions. We must be willing to converse, and explain our feelings and desires without extreme emotion. Our "agenda" must be stated truthfully at every turn; and the only true "agenda" has to be a desire for fairness and equal, not "special" rights. And we must remember that Amendment 2-type legislation can happen here again, and already has in other parts of the country.

We cannot relax now; our real mission is just beginning - education.

Sound-off is your page of the Newsletter. Each Month, we reserve this space for your feelings on subjects of interests to members. Please address your Sound-off to the Newsletter Editor....

Support Our Supporters

John Patrick Murphy, a well-known local attorney and Colorado Springs native, is very supportive of our community and deserves OUR support. He has a radio program dealing with legal issues that runs every Saturday from 11am to 12 noon on KVOR - 1300 AM. Though not gay himself, he frequently has spoken out against Amendment 2 and for the equal rights of lesbians, gays and bisexuals. Because of this, he often is called by the right-wing zealots and hassled.
With the ruling against 2, no doubt the blatherers will be on the attack. Please listen to his show and call in supportive and enlightening comments in the coming weeks. WE NEED TO SUPPORT OUR ALLIES!!

Did you know...?

Latest figures on Amendment 2's cost to our state from Boycott Colorado $120 million, including convention, meeting and business relocation losses, making Amendment 2 the most expensive civil rights violation in United States history (3 - 6 times larger than Arizona's boycott over Martin Luther King Day).

Ground Zero's Bulletin Board

Linda Sutton, M.A.

counselor • mediator • consultant

love matters for lesbians and gays

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Due to a programming problem, *"Be True To Yourself"* (GZ's OUT series) will be broadcast Tuesday, Jan. 4, at 9:00 p.m. on Channel 9 (cable) instead of its scheduled air time on Dec. 28

Help Wanted...

Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center (PPGLCC) needs your help. They are looking for volunteers to staff their Bingo Fundraising. PPGLCC Bingo is on Thursday Nights, with volunteers needed from 6 - 10pm. Volunteers receive training (including Bingo - calling), and in return are asked to work at least one Thursday per month. For Information, please call Marion at 471-0195 or the Helpline at 471-4429. PPGLCC is also looking for volunteers to staff their new office. Please help our community thrive!

This should be your Business card. Call the office for rates and details.

Think your friends might be missing something? They Are! Why not share this copy of the Ground Zero Newsletter with your friends, and let them fill out the membership form below to start receiving ALL the Ground Zero information, ALL the time.

Yes, I want to join Ground Zero in its fight against "2". Enclosed is $_____.
($10.00 is suggested, however if you can afford more it would be very appreciated. With a $10.00 or more membership you will receive GZ's monthly newsletter full of information.

Please, mark one of the following:
_____ Enter my name on your membership list.
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